

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY INTRODUCES BILL TO HELP LOCAL DEPARTMENTS DEAL WITH TERRORIST ATTACKS

BINGHAMTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that he has introduced legislation to provide \$1.5 billion to help local fire and police departments, emergency medical teams and health professionals prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks. Hinchey made the announcement at a meeting with local government leaders and emergency service providers.

"Local police departments, fire departments, and health professionals represent the front line in the homeland security effort," said Hinchey. "They respond first and, therefore, take the greatest risk. The federal government must ensure that they have the equipment, training and strategies they need to respond as effectively and safely as possible."

The Municipal Preparation and Strategic Response Act of 2001, of which Hinchey is an original cosponsor, would provide funding for municipal agencies for the strategic planning needed to ensure they are fully prepared, equipped and trained for emergency and security scenarios that arise from terrorist attacks. It would also provide for a coordinated regional response utilizing federal, state and local agencies.

"We need to coordinate our response from the bottom up, beginning with those departments and agencies that are first on the scene," Hinchey added. "While we can't live in fear, neither should we feel immune to attacks just because we live in small towns. The best way to reduce fear and to allow us to live our lives is to be sure we're prepared."

Hinchey met with elected officials, law enforcement officers, emergency service providers, and representatives of local hospitals to assess the current state of readiness in the Southern Tier and to identify additional needs.